***Confidential Report***

The Ultimate Home Defense Shotgun
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this report may be reproduced or transmitted in any form whatsoever, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any informational storage or retrieval system without express written, dated and signed permission from the author.

DISCLAIMER AND/OR LEGAL NOTICES:
The information presented herein represents the view of the author as of the date of publication. Because of the rate with which conditions change, the author reserves the right to alter and update his opinion based on the new conditions. The report is for informational purposes only. While every attempt has been made to verify the information provided in this report, neither the author nor his affiliates/partners assume any responsibility for errors, inaccuracies or omissions. Any slights of people or organizations are unintentional. If advice concerning legal or related matters is needed, the services of a fully qualified professional should be sought. This report is not intended for use as a source of legal advice. You should be aware of any laws which govern the topics discussed herein in your city, country and state. Any reference to any person or business whether living or dead is purely coincidental.
The Home Defense Shotgun

It is the all-powerful, wall-shattering, body-vaporizing “boom stick” of television and the movies.

It can carve a door from the side of a home, blow bite-sized chunks from steel, and fold a man in half before throwing him across the room.

It is great and terrifying, loud and profound.

It is the shotgun, and everything you’ve heard about it is probably wrong.

It’s not your fault. In what may perhaps be a case of familiarity breeding contempt, everyone thinks they understand the shotgun.

This is because it is so common. Most of us grew up with fathers who owned a shotgun or two.

If you live in or come from a rural area, shotguns and .22 rifles were and are a way of life. Rare is the farm family that doesn’t have a shotgun somewhere on the property.

In some areas, hunting with rifles is restricted, on the theory that rifle rounds travel too far in built-up areas, but shotgun hunting is still allowed — further increasing the weapon’s popularity.

And even today’s urban “tactical” consumers are drawn to the shotgun, particular pump-action guns, because they are relatively inexpensive, very durable, and subject to fewer restrictions than many other types of firearms (especially so-called “assault weapons”).

The shotgun, particularly the twelve-gauge shotgun, is a remarkably versatile weapon.

Heavy enough for game like deer, more than sufficient to taking on a human opponent, and adaptable to different tasks based on the load used, a basic twelve-gauge shotgun in multiple barrels or pump configuration can be used for trap, skeet, and other sporting activities, or it can be used to defend your home.

It is this last application that concerns us. There is, unfortunately, a great deal of misinformation out there about shotguns. You could hear any of this intoned as The One And Only Truth from either side of a gun store counter, and some of your fellow shooters may hold some of these myths near and dear to their hearts.

Ask any ten armed citizens about shotguns and you’ll get thirty opinions. Before we consider the reality of the shotgun for home defense, let’s dispel some of that mythology.

MYTH: You Don’t Have To Aim

Shotgun manufacturers bear some responsibility for the widespread belief that shotguns don’t need to be aimed.
It is, after all, a smoothbore weapon, and thus inherently less accurate than a weapon with a rifled barrel. The typical no-frills pump action or double-barreled shotgun has a bead front sight and no rear sight to speak of. There may be a sight channel along the top of the gun, but this isn’t exactly what you’d call a high-precision system.

Nonetheless, if you’re going to shoot accurately, you do have to aim. This means sighting down the barrel or barrels and doing your best to put your slug or shot payload on the target.

Without a choke tube (what we call “cylinder choke”), shot from a 12-gauge doesn’t spread very much at the ranges at which a self-defense encounter occurs.

This means that there’s little practical advantage to using shot over using deer slugs (more on ammunition later in detail). A slug from a 12-gauge will put a hole the size of a quarter in the target.

Double Aught Buck (00 Buckshot) — often considered the “gold standard” for self-defense stopping power — contains nine balls that are each about the size of a nine-millimeter bullet. In practice this looks a lot like chucking a handful of bullets at the target and hoping you don’t hit anything you didn’t mean to hit.

If you load shot instead of slugs for self-defense, be aware of the collateral damage you could cause if all the component balls don’t enter (and stay in) the target. Of course, it goes without saying that a twelve-gauge slug will penetrate pretty deeply at close range. You can punch one pretty much through-and-through the average premanufactured trailer home.

In just a moment, we’ll cover your choice of ammunition for home defense because—as you’re beginning to see—it matters more than you probably thought.

The point I’m trying to make here is the one thing you CAN’T do when it comes to shotguns is just kind of wave your shotgun in the general direction of the bad guy and pull the trigger.

That’s a formulate for failure. Unfortunately, a lot of shotguns get sold these days with pistol grips and no shoulder stocks. It’s extremely hard to hit anything with a shotgun like that, at anything other than extreme close range.

So when you have a pistol-grip-only shotgun, you are immediately cutting the effective range of that weapon to the length of a very small room. This amounts to not aiming if your target is any farther away than that. (If you’ve got it in your mind you’re going to hold the weapon up to eye level, please check YouTube for videos of people punching themselves in the face with their own shotguns and other firearms.)

The point is: you have to aim a shotgun, even though its useful range is shorter than that of a weapon with a rifled barrel (such as a carbine like an AR-15).

**MYTH: Birdshot For Self-Defense**

A very dangerous piece of misinformation that even very experienced gun people often fall for is this idea of using bird shot for self-defense. If you don’t know, birdshot is shotgun shot that is
very light and fine. It is light and fine for the reason its name implies: you use it to hunt and kill
birds, who are lightweight and relatively fragile.

The logic of using birdshot for self-defense goes something like this: Double Aught Buck and
slugs will punch right through a wall. This is extremely dangerous when defending yourself in
your home. In order to reduce the risk to your family members, you should load your shotgun
with bird shot. At close range, the shot will still poke a pretty big hole in the bad guy, but with
distance, the bird shot will spread out and penetrate far less, which is safer for everybody.

This logic sounds right (and to an extent there is) but there are some serious problems with it.
First, at the ranges you’re going to be shooting at another person in a realistic self-defense
encounter, you still want penetration ...

At the same time, you simply can’t be sure that birdshot simply doesn’t have penetrating power
or stopping power sufficient to put a human being down and out for the count. You’ll hit
someone with it and hurt them, sure, but they’ll still be able to keep fighting you unless you
manage to blind them with the shot.

And then again, if you’re close enough to hit your target with the load of birdshot, that shot will
still penetrate drywall. If this sounds contradictory, it sort of is. Just remember that birdshot
isn’t weak enough to be “safer” for use indoors, yet isn’t powerful enough to be an effective and
reliable stopper. Avoid it as a self-defense load unless your idea of self-defense is just scraping
off someone’s outer layer of skin.

If it’s a last ditch “all you have” solution to your problems then sure—shooting someone with a
gun is always better than not shooting them (the same could be said to justify carrying an ultra
small caliber “pocket” gun) just be aware that 1.) there are differences in shotgun shells and 2.)
birdshot is not the best choice and we’ll be discussing this more thoroughly in a few moments.

**MYTH: Just the Pump Sound Will Scare Him Off**

Advocates of the pump-action shotgun for self-defense will often cite the deterrent effect of
racking the pump. That fearsome sound, they tell you, will stop the enemy dead in his tracks,
much like the red light of a laser sight on his chest might.

The truth is: it might ... but don’t count on it. I forget the exact number, but anyone that has read
enough NRA reports of armed citizens defending themselves with guns quickly realizes
something – most of the time the armed citizen simply has to show they are armed. They never
have to fire a shot and the would-be criminal simply runs off!

That’s great, and the same thing might very well happen for you with your home defense
shotgun when you rack the action—and I pray that it does—but we don’t train for the best case
scenario, we train for when we have to defend our lives plain and simple.

People who believe this is true often say that it is the reason cops use pump-action shotguns on
patrol.
I hate to say it, but the reason cops use pump-action twelve-gauges is because pump-action twelve-gauges are simple, reliable, and relatively cost-effective. More progressive police departments issue carbines like the AR15 to their police officers.

The shotgun, or any firearm, might give you or me reason to wonder if we should change our behavior, if it was pointed at us. But pointing a shotgun and then racking the pump, much like racking the slide on a handgun, can also be seen as a provocative gesture.

One of the reasons that carrying with a round out of the chamber (Israeli style) is not always viewed positively for handguns used in self-defense is that racking the slide can be seen as escalating the conflict.

Think about it: You’re confronting a guy who was trying to break into your house. You tell him to stop right there. He stops... and you rack the slide or the pump of your firearm. He may take that action as the indication you are about to kill him, and he might just come right at you in the hopes of stopping you so he can live.

Now, this isn’t to say that racking the pump might not scare a bad guy. It all depends on how reasonable he’s feeling. You just shouldn’t base your choice of firearm on this very unreliable notion that you’re going to scare people with it.

The bottom line is: If you’re going to point a gun at somebody, it had better be because you are justified to shoot if you do go through with the act. You should never use your gun like a magic wand, waving it about in the hope that it will alter people’s behavior simply because it is a gun.

**MYTH: Pimp My AR-12-Gauge**

A frequent criticism of people who accessorize the Kalashnikov pattern assault rifle is that they hang too much plastic crap on it, trying to turn it into a Russian-made AR15. The reason this is silly is that the two are very different rifles.

The AR15 is sleek, accurate, ergonomic, and relatively fragile compared to some other guns. The Kalashnikov is durable, sloppy, and the opposite of ergonomic (right down the charging handle being on the wrong side of the gun because it’s part of the bolt).

Turning it into a look-alike of the AR15, complete with a multiple position stock and rails on every conceivable surface, just makes it try to be something it isn’t.

The same is true of people who try to turn their shotgun into an assault rifle.

If you look, you can find just about anything by way of accessories, and you can hang these all on your poor, unsuspecting pump gun. That includes the aforementioned multiple position stock, a pistol grip, a foregrip, rails everywhere, multiple optics, a laser, and any number of other things.

But these accessories, after a certain point, just become a distraction. Many of them are solutions in search of problems, too: The typical AR15-style stock, on a shotgun, doesn’t always make it more comfortable, and in fact makes it less so to shoot. The same is true of some models.
of folding stock. If you are going to hit anything accurately at moderate distances, you’re going to want the shoulder stock out, and some of those folding stocks are like a sharpened piece of cement next to your shoulder.

Avoid the temptation to keep putting new accessories on your shotgun. The pump shotgun is useful because it is simple. Don’t overcomplicate it. We’re going to cover a couple of accessories that I’ve put on my own shotgun and that might interest you as well, but just know this now, a pump shotgun—even a hunting model setup with a long barrel—will work fine for home defense.

**MYTH: ANYTHING Joe Biden says, example: “Get a Shotgun, Get a Shotgun, Get a Shotgun!”**

By far the worst advice ever given to the public on the topic of shotguns was given by Vice President Joe Biden. I can’t say this with more emphasis: Joe Biden is a moron.

The man decided, like liberal Democrats so often do, that he was an expert on firearms. Then he used the bully pulpit of his position to lie to the American public and spread misinformation, all in the name of telling people that they didn’t need to buy an AR15 because AR15 rifles aren’t good for self-defense.

Now, the opposite is true, especially for women: The ergonomic and relatively low-recoil AR15 is perfect for a female home defender. It has enough firepower with standard magazines to get the job done even against multiple opponents, it’s accurate, it’s easy to handle even if your hands are smaller, and the weapon makes it easy to track a target for follow-up shots.

Biden, though, basically said that it was shotguns, not the AR15, that were best for home defense. Repeating himself like a mental patient, he whispered in a creepy voice, “Get a shotgun. Get a shotgun.”

Then he told anyone listening that if they thought they heard an intruder, they should go outside and, with their trusty-double barreled shotgun (a two-shot weapon) they should fire a “couple of blasts” into the night. That, concluded a beaming, idiotic Biden, would scare off anyone who might be thinking bad thoughts, thus saving the defender.

If you know anything at all about firearms, you know this is advice only a mentally handicapped person could offer.

It isn’t just stupid and ignorant; it’s reckless.

In most states, even firing a deliberately aimed warning shot will put you in jail. Shooting at nothing without aiming, heedless of the consequences and without giving any thought to what or who you might hit, is the stuff lawsuits are made of.

If you followed Biden’s advice, you would be LUCKY to be arrested. You deserve to be sued and ruined forever, because that’s the kind of nutty behavior with a firearm that gets innocent people killed.
So let that be a lesson to you: When you take the ignorant, made-up firearms advice of “experts” who happen to be liberal Democrats, prison is your BEST outcome.

It goes without saying that the shotgun is not a noisemaker that scares people away. It is a deadly weapon and you must use it only when you are both legally and morally justified to do so.

That means ignoring anything a liberal politician has to tell you about self-defense with a gun.

Now that we’ve taken down some of the common myths, let’s move onto some true facts ...
The Cold, Hard Facts

If you are shopping for a home-defense shotgun, you basically have two choices: a pump action or a double-barrel.

The advantage of double-barreled shotguns is that they are even simpler than pumps (and thus more reliable).

You can buy some home-defense models that have integral rails, too. These are ugly as sin but you can mount flashlights to them. In a home-defense long gun, a flashlight is a great thing to have, because it is difficult to hold a flashlight and a shotgun at the same time.

Having a compact two-shot shotgun with a flashlight and possibly some sort of red-dot optic system is not a bad choice at all for home defense. You can always put various shell carriers on it if you need more shells.

For greater firepower and more versatility, however, a pump gun in twelve-gauge is “best”. I put best in quotations because it’s the best for “most” people (once size fits most right?). The 12 gauge is a versatile, extremely capable round ...

You could consider one in .410, a lighter load that is the same diameter as .45 Long Colt. These are okay but don’t have the reassuring power of a twelve-gauge. Again, it’s certainly better than nothing if that’s all you have (or if you already hunt with such a weapon and know it like the back of your hand for instance).

A 20 gauge might be an excellent “compromise” choice—especially if you yourself are a smaller framed person, you’re getting old and weak (or your shoulders ache and don’t like the kick of a 12 gauge) or if your shotgun is going to be primarily used by your wife (and she happens to be 90lbs soaking wet and doesn’t like shooting a 12 gauge because of the recoil).

Another thing about 20 gauge shotguns is they often come in “youth models” with a smaller stock (more useful for “close quarters” home defense situations). And—with a hat tip to James Yeager—the 20 gauge is still twice as powerful as a 44 magnum (the handgun that Clint Eastwood as Dirty Harry famously called “the most powerful handgun in the world”).

Overall a 20-gauge youth model, pump action might be exactly what you want—and a good all around choice.

There is one more option and that is a semi-auto shotgun. To be completely transparent I have ZERO experience with semi-auto shotguns. I would not caution you against them, but I do know that pump shotguns are (generally) cheaper and the option that most people decide on.

Personally, I like to have a twelve-gauge pump with the proper ammunition on hand for home-defense challenges, as this gives any user a good chance of meeting even more than one home invader with considerable authority.
Flashlight mounts are available for pump guns, and even fore-ends with built in flashlights, so don’t neglect adding a light to your gun. And if you must accessorize, there’s more than one way to add a shell carrier to your shotgun so you have plenty of ammunition at your fingertips.

There is something else you should consider when packing a home defense shotgun, and that is investing in a good pair of electronic ear protectors.

Most people won’t wear regular non-electronic hearing protectors in a home-defense situation because you need to be able to hear if there are home invaders moving around. Electronic hearing protectors let you hear normally (or relatively so) but cut out noise over a certain decibel level so as to protect your hearing.

It is unlikely you will shoot enough in a home-defense situation that your hearing is endangered, but even a single shot, indoors, from a twelve-gauge will set your ears to ringing.

Under the stress of an actual encounter, you might not hear the shot with your brain. You will, however, hear the ringing after the fact, and if you fire more than once, you may experience some genuine hearing loss from doing all this in an enclosed space. Having electronic hearing protection on hand with your defense gear makes it easier to do the job of defending your home while protecting all parts of your body.

Resist the urge to gear up with these and some night vision goggles, which will restrict your vision too much and aren’t as helpful as a simple flashlight. You aren’t in “Splinter Cell,” after all.

That’s it. That’s the least you need to know about the home-defense shotgun. Make sure you take all these factors into account when you select your shotgun and train with it to protect your home. The lives you save could be those of your family.

So ... What Do I Recommend?

Ok, I gave you the general “facts” – or as much as could be said about a personal choice such as choosing your personal firearm.

Here is what I recommend:

Either a 20 gauge or 12 gauge pump-action shotgun. Specifically, Mossberg and Remington both make proven pump actions and they are NOT expensive. Even more specifically, the Mossberg 500 or 590 and the Remington 870 are the top choices here.

Now, depending on when you read this Mossberg and/or Remington might have several different models to choose from. You can start with something labeled “tactical” as you generally will get a shotgun that’s practically “out of the box” ready for home defense.
Also, depending on your height/reach—you may want to look at a youth model if it fits you better. To be honest, because I’m a short person (under 5 foot 7 inches), if I had known the youth models were the same just ... smaller ... then I would of tried to get one of those.

Personally, I have a Remington 870 express tactical that my (wonderful) wife picked up for me on one of my birthdays. It was practically perfect from the day I received it, yet as you’ll see in this report, I’ve tried out some different things to make it more “custom” for me and my particular family defense needs.

In this report, we’ll use my Remington 870 express tactical as this represents a classic pump action 12 gauge configuration that is not hard to find, it’s not expensive, and it’s actually quite common.

Here’s what my shotgun looked like the first day I got it ...

As you can see—it already looks the part. Here’s a description of it that I grabbed off the internet ...

... Features an 18-inch barrel, black finish, black synthetic stock, bead sights, cylinder bore, 3" chamber, black rubber recoil pad, 2-shot magazine extension, an overall length of 38.5 inches, an unloaded weight of 7.25 lbs, and a 6+1 round capacity.

SPECIFICATIONS:
• BRAND: ............. Remington
• MODEL: ............. 870 Express Tactical
• TYPE: ............. Shotgun
• CALIBER: ........... 12 Gauge
• FINISH: ............. Black Matte
• ACTION: ............. Pump Action
• STOCK: ............. Black Synthetic
If you already have a shotgun, then you can always use what you have. But if you’re going to buy one new, then this is a good “start” in my opinion. Great one actually. It’s already got an extended magazine tube (giving you 6 shells in the tube plus 1 in the chamber) and it’s matte “tactical” black, the polymer furniture and the 18” barrel make it just about perfect.

Again, if they offered this in a “youth” model, I would probably have not have had to modify the stock – because as you’ll see I’ve been experimenting to try to find the right stock to shorten the length of pull and fit my “smaller” frame/height.

The Mossberg 500, in 20-gauge, the youth model, is a great choice as well. You, your wife, even your kids can all shoot a 20-gauge. James Yeager has a whole video on why this is a great choice. The model number appears to be the Mossberg 500 persuader #54300.

Now, let’s first talk about the importance of shotgun ammunition (and gauge) and then we’ll move onto customizing the shotgun.
The Importance Of The Right Ammunition ...

We’ve already covered the myth that “bird shot” is fine for self defense/home defense. To recap: it’s not ... with the caveat that if that’s all you have ... then ok, so be it.

But we’re talking optimal here. So avoid the bird shot and let’s talk buckshot.

That’s the point of this report—I think you already knew that shooting someone with a shotgun was going to make their day worse—so this report is about setting up your home defense shotgun to be the absolute best, custom home defense gun for YOUR situation.

That last part is important:

We are talking about customizing your shotgun for YOUR situation. And I’m not just talking about customizing the looks, or feel of your shotgun when I say it should fit your situation.

Your ammunition choice comes down to your situation as well. First lets define shotgun ammo and then get into a couple of examples of how to choose the right ammo for your situation (instead of giving you a “this is the only choice” answer) ...

What Makes Shotgun Shells Different From Other Ammunition Cartridges?

From Wikipedia:

“A shotgun shell or shotshell is a self-contained cartridge loaded with lead shot or a shotgun slug which is designed to be fired from a shotgun.”

It goes on to describe the history of shotgun shells, then states ...

“Today, modern shotgun shells typically consist of a plastic case, with the base covered in a thin brass covering ... Often the more powerful loads will use "high brass" shells, with the brass extended up further along the sides of the shell, while light loads will use "low brass" shells. The brass does not actually provide a significant amount of strength, but the difference in appearance provides shooters with a way to quickly differentiate between high and low powered ammunition.”
“... The base of the shotshell is fairly thick to hold the large shotgun primer, which is longer than primers used for rifle and pistol ammunition. Modern smokeless powders are far more efficient than the original black powder used in shotgun shells, so very little space is actually taken by powder; shotguns use small quantities of double base powders, equivalent to quick-burning pistol powders, with up to 50% nitroglycerin. After the powder comes the wadding or wad. The primary purpose of a wad is to prevent the shot and powder from mixing, and to provide a seal that prevents gas from blowing through the shot rather than propelling it. The wad design may also encompass a shock absorber and a cup that holds the shot together until it is out the barrel.

A modern wad consists of three parts, the powder wad, the cushion, and the shot cup, which may be separate pieces or be one part. The powder wad acts as the gas seal (known as obturation), and is placed firmly over the powder; it may be a paper or plastic part. The cushion comes next, and it is designed to compress under pressure, to act as a shock absorber and minimize the deformation of the shot; it also serves to take up as much space as is needed between the powder wad and the shot. Cushions are almost universally made of plastic with crumple zones, although for game shooting in areas grazed by farm stock or wildlife biodegradable fibre wads are often preferred. The shot cup is
the last part of the shell, and it serves to hold the shot together as it moves down the barrel. Shot cups have slits on the sides so that they peel open after leaving the barrel, allowing the shot to continue on in flight undisturbed. Shot cups, where used, are also almost universally plastic. The shot fills the shot cup (which must be of the correct length to hold the desired quantity of shot), and the shotgun shell is then crimped, or rolled closed.

A Quick Explanation of Gauges ...

Again from Wikipedia ...

“Shotgun shells are generally measured by "gauge", ... Rifles and handguns are almost always measured in "caliber", which is simply a measurement of the internal diameter of the barrel measured in millimeters or inches and, consequently, is approximately equal to the diameter of the projectile that is fired. By contrast, shotguns are usually measured by “gauge”, which is the weight, in fractions of a pound, of a pure lead round ball that is the same diameter as the internal diameter of the barrel.

... The most popular shotgun gauge by far is 12-gauge. The larger 10-gauge, once popular for hunting larger birds such as goose and turkey, is in the decline with the advent of longer, "magnum" 12-gauge shells, which offer similar performance. The mid-size 20-gauge is also a very popular chambering for smaller-framed shooters who favor its reduced recoil, those hunting smaller game, and experienced trap and skeet shooters who like the additional challenge of hitting their targets with a smaller shot charge. Other less-common, but commercially available gauges are 16
and 28. Several other gauges may be encountered but are considered obsolete... The .410 bore is the smallest shotgun size which is widely available commercially.”

Why Is 12 Gauge So Popular?

I’m not sure why the 12 gauge specifically really took off, but the reason why shotguns in particular are so popular all comes down to stopping power for our purposes.

When it comes to home defense, you want to take the attacker down and put him out with as few shots as possible (preferably the first shot). The attacker will be full of adrenalin, and might be hopped up on drugs, so it’s not enough to punch holes in him (though that will eventually kill him if he bleeds out or when his blood pressure drops from so many holes in the main cavity, that he drops)—it’s important you hit him hard as well.

To put the shotgun in perspective ...

A .38 special (what cops used to carry when revolvers were the standard handgun) produces roughly 200-400 foot-pounds of force. The .38 is often cited as the “lowest” size cartridge you should go with handguns for personal defense ...

The .223 rifle (basically the AR-15 or M-16 in 5.56 NATO) produces roughly 1,200 foot-pounds.

**With the 12-gauge shotgun, you are hitting your attacker with 2,000 foot lbs or more.** Even the smaller 20-gauge can hit between 1,200 to 2,000+ ft lbs. This is serious force. In short, a shotgun blast can take out anything that walks on land in North America.

For your reference:

- **410 shotgun muzzle energy 400-900 ft/lbs**
- **20-gauge muzzle energy 1200-2200 ft/lbs**
- **12-gauge muzzle energy 2000-3000 ft/lbs**

So the first reason a shotgun is optimal for home defense is it has extreme stopping power. Now, let’s talk about the stuff that is actually flying into the attacker with thousands of pounds of force.

The Importance Of The Shot You Use ...

Shotgun pellets are classified in two general categories:

1.) **Birdshot** (individual pellets typically less than .20 caliber in diameter)
2.) **Buckshot** (pellets vary in diameter from .24 caliber to .36 caliber)
We’ve already discussed that birdshot is not optimal for home defense. This is because the pellets are so small they don’t have the mass and density to penetrate deeply enough to reach and damage critical organs. It will cause mass tissue trauma up to 6 inches deep but typically no more.

Let’s talk about Buckshot specifically, since it’s the optimal choice for home defense (from Wikipedia again, emphasis mine)...

“Larger sizes of shot, large enough that they must be carefully packed into the shell rather than simply dumped or poured in, are called "buckshot" or just "buck" ... Buckshot size is designated by actual diameter or (traditionally) by letter or number, with smaller numbers being larger shot.

... Sizes larger than "0" ("ought") are designated by multiple zeros. "00" ("double-ought") is the most commonly used size.

“... The most commonly produced buckshot shell is a 12 gauge, 00 buck shell that holds 9 pellets. Buckshot is generally used for two purposes, self-defense and hunting medium to large game. Loads can be tailored through altering the size of the shot, pellet count, length of the shell, powder charge, and in other ways to fit individual weapons and purposes. For instance, loads of 12 gauge 00 buck are commonly available in 8 to 18 pellets in vendor-stated lengths from 2 3/4” to 3 1/2” ... Reduced-recoil shells are becoming increasingly available. Low-recoil 00 buckshot allows the shooter to make fast follow-up shots, which may be needed in a combat situation. They are also useful for training shooters who are not yet used to the recoil of full power shells.”

Here’s a complete chart for your reference, which I’ll most likely refer to later ...
Why You Need Penetration ...

Why do you have to worry about penetration? Isn’t 2,000 foot pounds of force enough? It’s a start but if you’ve decided to shoot someone you want them non-functional. To get to non-functional you need to hit vital organs that the body needs to function ...

It’s the same thing as knife fighting—many people may see someone all cut up or imagine slicing someone to bits and stopping them with a knife—but the reality is that stabbing someone is the only “sure” way to stop them. And many times you will have to stab until you hit a vital organ.

The same goes for your bullets or in this case “shot”. Luckily there has been extensive research into this area by the FBI and others. The short answer is the shot you choose should meet the FBI’s requirement of at least 12” of penetration in properly prepared ballistic gelatin/soft tissue.

Keep in mind this is a “gray area” and the 12” recommendation is considering all angles that a bullet could enter the body (from the ground at an angle, it might have to travel over 15” to get to the attacker’s heart if it entered near the bottom of the abdomen, for example). This standard is supposed to be a “catch all” to determine “enough penetration”.

Why You Do Not Need Penetration ...

On the other hand, in a home, you may have family members or other “non combatants” that are in just the other room behind the attacker. In most homes, walls are made of thin drywall—and any type of bullet that will penetrate more than 12” will penetrate clean through drywall.

So the answer for the home defense shotgun is not to just go for penetration … it becomes a little more complicated.

I will say now, that I definitely do NOT recommend “slugs” for the home defense shotgun. The risk of over penetration (even if you hit the bad guy) is too great. The risk is even greater if you miss that the slug will continue through quite a few walls and hit something you don’t want it to hit.

So while various studies may determine the “best” buckshot for stopping power … it also becomes and individual thing based on your unique situation. Your house, your family, your concerns.

So What Is The “Ultimate” Home Defense Shotgun Shell?

In Tactical Brief #10 (October 1998) from the Firearms Tactical Website, they came to this interesting conclusion:

“12 Gauge Shotshell Ammunition
For personal defense and law enforcement applications, the International Wound Ballistics Association advocates number 1 buckshot as being superior to all other buckshot sizes.¹

Number 1 buck is the smallest diameter shot that reliably and consistently penetrates more than 12 inches of standard ordnance gelatin when fired at typical shotgun engagement distances. A standard 2 ¾-inch 12 gauge shotshell contains 16 pellets of #1 buck. The total combined cross sectional area of the 16 pellets is 1.13 square inches. Compared to the total combined cross sectional area of the nine pellets in a standard #00 (double-aught) buck shotshell (0.77 square inches), the # 1 buck shotshell has the capacity to produce over 30 percent more potentially effective wound trauma.

In all shotshell loads, number 1 buckshot produces more potentially effective wound trauma than either #00 or #000 buck. In addition, number 1 buck is less likely to over-penetrate and exit an attacker's body.

For home defense applications a standard velocity 2 ¾-inch #1 buck shotshell (16 pellet payload) from Federal, Remington or Winchester is your best choice. We feel the Federal Classic 2 ¾-inch #1 buck load (F127) is slightly better than the same loads offered by Remington and Winchester. The Federal shotshell uses both a plastic shot cup and granulated plastic shot buffer to minimize post-ignition pellet deformation, whereas the Remington and Winchester loads do not.

Second best choice is Winchester’s 2 ¾-inch Magnum #1 buck shotshell, which is loaded with 20 pieces of copper-plated, buffered, hardened lead #1 buckshot. For those of you who are concerned about a tight shot pattern, this shotshell will probably give you the best patterning results in number 1 buck. This load may not be a good choice for those who are recoil sensitive.

Third choice is any standard or reduced recoil 2 ¾-inch #00 lead buckshot load from Winchester, Remington or Federal.

If you choose a reduced recoil load or any load containing hardened Magnum #00 buckshot you increase the risk of over-penetration because these innovations assist in maintaining pellet shape integrity. Round pellets have better sectional density for deeper penetration than deformed pellets.

Fourth choice is any 2 ¾-inch Magnum shotshell that is loaded with hardened, plated and buffered #4 buckshot. The Magnum cartridge has the lowest velocity, and the lower velocity will help to minimize pellet deformation on impact. The hardened buckshot and buffering granules also help to minimize pellet deformation too. These three innovations help to maximize pellet penetration. Number 4 hardened buckshot is a marginal performer. Some of the hardened buckshot will penetrate at least 12 inches deep and some will not.

¹ Cotey, Gus J.: "Number 1 Buckshot, the Number 1 Choice." Wound Ballistics Review, 2(4), 10-18, 1996
20 Gauge Shotshell Ammunition Recommendations

We're unaware of any ammunition company who offers a 20 gauge shotshell that is loaded with #1 buckshot. The largest shot size commercially available that we know of is number 2 buck.

From a strict wound ballistics standpoint, we feel the Federal Classic 3-inch 20 gauge Magnum number 2 buckshot cartridge is the best choice. It contains 18 pellets of number 2 buckshot in a plastic shotcup with granulated plastic shot buffer.

However, the Federal Classic load might produce too much recoil for some people. Given this consideration, Remington's Premier Buckshot 2 ¾-inch 20 gauge number 3 buckshot cartridge is the next best choice. This load contains 20 pieces of nickel-plated, hardened lead shot that is buffered to reduce pellet deformation from post ignition acceleration and terminal impact. The Remington buckshot load will probably produce the tightest shot patterns in 20 gauge shotguns.

Third place is Winchester's 3-inch 20 gauge Magnum number 3 buckshot cartridge, which contains 24 pieces of buffered, copper-plated, hardened lead shot.

Now, for most people on the internet, this has become the gold standard advice (in a nutshell):

"#1 Buckshot is hard to find, so 00 Buckshot which is similar (and readily available) is the best choice".

You should notice something though:

1. Eventually, there is first, second and third choices of buckshot ... the point being pretty much every type of buckshot will put down a human like you need it to.

2. The only other main concern is over penetration ...

How To Choose The Right Size Shell For You ...

As stated before, 00 buck is the most popular buckshot round recommended by most people you will ask. It also has very impressive “stopping power” statistics ...

Typically, it is filled with 9 pellets all about the same size as a .32 caliber handgun. Imagine a guy breaks into your house, and you plus NINE of your other friends are all standing there with .32 caliber handguns pointing at him and you ALL fire at the same time – hitting him in practically the same 5 spot in his chest.

But is it ideal for you and you situation specifically?
Here’s a couple of examples ... 

“Old Man” Joe Farmer is scenario one. Old Joe the farmer lives out in the middle of the boonies. As such, there ain’t a neighbor to be seen for miles. Plus, he’s old and while he has grandkids they almost never stay the night at his house (they prefer the “creature comforts” of the city life). So it’s just him and his wife of 50 plus years out on the farm.

That means every night him and his wife lay down to bed together and they’re the only ones in his big old farmhouse in the middle of their 80 acres. Now, the shotgun that Old Joe the farmer is using for home defense—including his choice of ammunition—will most likely be quite different than what you will use (it certainly is different than what I will use in my home).

For instance:

- Old Farmer Joe is used to killing bucks on his property with buck shot. He used to hunt with slugs but the kick is too much these days so he just loads up double aught buck and doesn’t take any “long distance” shots anymore (he can’t see that great anyways).
- Old Farmer Joe uses that same shotgun for home defense—makes sense as he’s perfectly familiar with that shotgun as a weapon.
- He loads it up with 00 buck for home defense too because he reasons that if it’ll take down a deer it’ll take down a human (especially if they make the wrong decision of entering the four walls of his home and getting in that close of range!)
- He does NOT have any children or any other family members living in his home with him. It’s just him and his wife (they go to bed together at the same time every night—early to bed early to rise) so she’s always in the bedroom with him. What this means is that if he misses with his 00 buckshot, the pellets can go through as many walls as they want and he has no fear of hurting a loved one. Plus, because his house was made so long ago, the buckshot probably won’t make it through that many interior walls—they’re hardwood filled and covered with plaster.
- Also, he lives on over 80 acres if for some reason he has to engage a criminal outside his home—he has no worries that his stray buckshot are going to hurt anyone.

In “Old Man” Farmer Joe’s case—00 buckshot is the correct choice. It will put down whatever he aims at and he has no worries about over penetration or stray pellets if he misses. Just load another shell and keep shooting.

Now most people on the internet will say “Only 00 buck shot for home defense” because they say it’s the only one that will penetrate 12 inches deep and will definitely stop your attacker. Granted, it will do those things. But is it right for you and your unique situation?

Ok, so that’s Old Man Farmer Joe. Now let’s consider average Joe Suburbs.

Joe Suburbs lives in the (you guessed it) suburban area. Not quite the big city though, so he’s got a nice quarter acre lot, with a single family home. 4 bedrooms though, a somewhat big house, new construction (last 10-15 years).
Of course he has plenty of neighbors. And he’s still in his prime working years and raising two kids along with his dear wife. Importantly, Joe along with his wife are in the master bedroom upstairs, and the kids bedrooms are side by side each other on one side of the hall upstairs too.

He hunted a little as a kid (killed a rabbit once) but mainly he has done target shooting with the shotgun. He correctly reasons that 00 buck might be a poor choice for him because:

- His kids are just down the hall (which if someone invades his home in the middle of the night, is where they will most likely be)
- His home is new construction, aka he can punch through his drywall walls if he had to—meaning bullets will easily go through them ...
- He wants to put down a bad guy, but doesn’t want to risk his kids lives if he has a stray pellet go through a wall, or the pellets over penetrate in any way.

He (correctly in my opinion) reasons that 00 buck is the wrong choice for him. What is the better choice?

He – and myself included – needs to find a “happy medium” in stopping power and not over penetrating his target, or in the case that stray shots go through walls and hurt loved ones.

**What I Put In My Own Shotgun ...**

Because my situation closely mirrors “Joe Suburbs” (worried about penetration because I have lots of people in the home I don’t want to stick pellets in), I’ve settled on #4 Buckshot.

Here’s my reasons why:

**Reason 1:** I don’t think I’ll be shooting anything over 20 yards with my shotgun. Most likely not even 20 feet (we’re talking from one wall to the other in my bedroom most likely – less than 20 feet).

As such, I believe stopping power and penetration at less than 20 yards is more than adequate (even though it’s the “smallest” of the buckshot family.) Take a look at the size comparisons in the picture below though ...

As you can see, #4 buckshot pellets are not **that** much smaller than the 00 buckshot pellets. Plus, you get about three times as many of them to hit your target with.
Ballistic testing for “wounding” supports the fact that more pellets at close range is probably better. Specifically, this quote speaks to me:

“#4 buckshot is what we here at consider the minimum all purpose buckshot load for tactical applications. It balances decent penetration with a higher projectile count; increasing your first round hit probability over both #1 buck and 00 buck at medium shotgun range. If all pellets strike the intended target (likely when utilized at closer range) #4 buckshot offers several times the effective wound channel creation capabilities over both #1 and 00 buck.”

Reason 2: It penetrates enough at the 20 yards or less I expect to use my shotgun at:

- Up to 20 yards, ballistic data supports roughly the 12” penetration you want ...

- At point blank range you’ll see more than that (up to 15” I’ve read) penetration

- So there’s adequate penetration with three times the amount of shot in the same “spread” (at this close of a distance almost all shotguns have the same “spread”—that is their pattern is about the same). This gives you more of a “chance” to hit a vital organ.

---

Now, the point I made about “spread” is important. This is also called “patternning”—what the shot does as it comes out your shell at different ranges. At the close ranges I’m talking about—from one wall of my bedroom to the other—under 10 yards—the buckshot has barely spread.

This is a piece of cardboard about the size of a sheet of paper (not as wide actually) that I just shot with #4 buckshot (I’ll explain what the red line is for in a moment):

![Cardboard with bullet holes](image)

Important points to note:

- The huge hole in the center is the “wad” that holds your shot together, at these distances it just goes right through the target ...

- Then you see about 16 holes around the huge hole in the center, in a circle around it with one hold in the bottom left near the red line (they call this a “flyer” in buckshot talk)

- **The red line is there because those bullet holes BELOW the red line are not buckshot. They are .223/5.56 from an AR-15.** I’m glad they’re there because it points something out—look at the diameter (size) of those holes compared to the shots above—they’re about the same size (actually slightly smaller). **In other words, getting hit with #4 buck shot is like getting hit with a full 27 round magazine of .223 all at once!**
(Obviously not the exact same but I’m talking about the diameter of the projectile, the hole it’s making, etc)

**Reason 3:** If for some reason the first #4 buckshot shell doesn’t put him down ... I have 5 more in the tube and another 5-6 in the side saddle. Anything that buckshot bigger than #4 can do in one shot I can accomplish with two #4 shells (of that I’m sure!)

**Reason 4:** This is my primary reason. The **risk of collateral damage is lower with #4 buckshot:**

- any stray pellets from the #4 buckshot not hitting the target are going to be less dangerous “downrange” (because of the much quicker velocity loss of the smaller shots, #4 buckshot becomes ineffective much faster).

- #4 buckshot will lose “steam” faster after going through some drywall or other building materials (thereby being less dangerous to innocent people in other rooms, neighbors, etc). You can even see comparison tests of people shooting drywall on youtube of this type of penetration.

**Reason 5:** I’ve heard a lot of good things about #4 buckshot as an overall good choice. I first heard about it from a respected writer I follow. After researching more I found out most police departments used to use it. Later, I saw Mike Lamb recommend it on some YouTube videos.

Finally, a friend of mine just the other day as soon as I mentioned buckshot for home defense immediately mentioned #4 buckshot — he said he took down every deer he ever shot with a shotgun using #4 (and he has taken a LOT of deer down with a shotgun).

The bottom line?

1. I would consider your unique situation (penetration, other people in home, etc) and ...

2. After taking that into account, I would say ANY buckshot from #4 up to 000 would work fine—get enough to practice with, get some good shotgun training and then stop worrying about specific loads. If it can take down a deer it can take down a human in your home at point blank range.

Let’s move on ...
Accessories You Actually Need ...

As I stated before, just a regular old hunting shotgun with some buckshot is going to be plenty effective for home defense.

If you’re on a budget, that might be all you can do right now and that’s understandable ...

However, if you have the money there are SOME accessories that I think you “need” for a good home defense shotgun. Again this report is about “optimizing” your shotgun for home defense—everyone knows that shooting a bad guy with a shotgun is going to be a pretty bad day for the bad guy.

That said there’s no need to go overboard and have so many things hanging off your shotgun that you don’t need (to say nothing of the hundreds if not thousands of dollars you can waste).

In fact, when it comes to shotguns, I almost feel like their affordability kind of makes me less likely to want to spend money on them. I mean, you can get a good home defense shotgun (even with all the “bells and whistles” such as an 18” barrel, synthetic stock, extended tube magazine) for around $400. Definitely less than $500 at the time of this writing.

So while most guys won’t think anything of spending $400 on a holopoint scope for their AR-15 rifle that costs $700 or $1,000 – I have a hard time spending money on an accessory for the shotgun that costs almost as much as the gun itself!

ALL that said, I think there are about 4 accessories everyone should consider for a home defense shotgun:

1. Proper Length of Pull (LOP) Stock
2. Light
3. Sling
4. Side Saddle

After we cover these “essentials” I’ll talk about a few more options that you may or may not need.

Let’s get started ...

*** Proper Stock (with the right LOP) ***

You might find that the length of your shotgun doesn’t quite seem “easy” to get up to your shoulder really quickly ...
You also may notice that you’re going to be using your shotgun for “close quarters combat” (CQB) which means a shorter length shotgun overall is the best bet.

That’s why most “tactical” shotguns are sold with 18-20 inch barrels. It makes the whole shotgun smaller and more easy to maneuver (and maybe a little lighter too than a longer barrel giving you an even easier time using it).

In contrast most hunting shotguns, like for deer or birds or clay target shooting, are made longer (for accuracy) and you don’t have to worry about those types of things (you have more time to get the shotgun into the pocket of your shoulder, etc)

So the first thing you can do is buy a “tactical” shotgun that has a barrel of 18 to 20 inches (or try to use your shotgun with a similar length barrel even if it’s not labeled “Tactical”).

Then the next thing to look at is your stock and the length of pull (LOP).

See, your standard shotgun comes with about a 14” Length of Pull (unless you get a youth model). It’s good for bird hunting, etc as I said because your feet need to be planted, your body needs to be bladed. It’s ok for pivoting from that stance, but moving around is not so stable.

Better is a more modern and “squared” up stance, almost like the stance a boxer would use. It’s also similar to the “isosceles” shooting stance you would use with a handgun (weight distributed over both feet a little more).

So in summary, I believe the 14” standard stock length might work for anyone over 5’ 10” tall, and that anyone under that should move down to a 13” length of pull at least, maybe even a 12” length of pull if it feels better.

It’s also worth noting that it’s easier to deal with a shorter length of pull shotgun than one that is too long ...

Anyways, to achieve this shorter length of pull you have a few options with your stocks ...

1. **Choose an adjustable AR-style pistol grip stock**: One of the most popular, economic and most adjustable options is an AR-15 style 6-point adjustable stock.

I actually bought this one to try out on my shotgun (mainly because it was cheap and readily available on amazon):
*Ultimate Arms Gear Remington 870 Adjustable Pistol Grip Stock.*

Obviously you have to like shooting a pistol grip style weapon to get something like this. And you have to like the adjustability of the “AR-15 style” stock.

Blackhawk also makes a popular version and for the most part they’re inexpensive and lightweight. I’ve yet to test it out though.

2. **Choose a more traditional style stock—only shorter:** You have a few options here...

1. **Order the shorter “youth” model stock for your shotgun** (Remington and Mossberg both make youth stocks) – or buy the youth model in the first place.

2. **Hogue makes a 12” LOP stock** (it has the “overrubber” molding like most Hogue products on the grip which some people like the feel of). [Click here to see it.](#)

3. **Magpul makes a cross between a pistol grip and a traditional stock that a lot of people like**—and it has a very adjustable length of pull. [Click here to see it ...](#)
4. You could just cut off an inch or two from the stock that’s on your current shotgun to customize it to your optimal length-of-pull. Make sure to measure and account for the size of the rubber butt pad that is on most shotguns.

Here’s how I did mine ...

First, here’s the way the stock looked from the factory:

It’s pretty long as you can see there. When you factor in the recoil pad on the butt of it you see that piece makes it even longer.
I think if you didn’t care about your shoulder you could pop off the recoil pad there and try it out to see if you liked it at that length (about an inch to inch and a half shorter pull) to see the difference a shorter stock makes. You could at least dry fire and shoulder your shotgun like that to see the difference that shortening the length of pull will make – believe me you’ll like it if your recoil pad is anything near the thickness that mine is.

Anyways, when you take the pad off you’ll see it has a “ledge” or recessed area that fits inside the stock:

That’s because the inside of the stock has a recessed area where it fits in there, as you can see in this picture here (it’s like a little lip on the inside):

Here’s a close up so you can see how that piece looks. The point I’m trying to make is you’ll have to cut your stock AND the butt pad so they fit back together the right way, when you screw it back on (it’s just two wood screws right there – Phillips head on the Remington 870):
Anyways, so I took the recoil pad off and then measured a full inch from the end of the stock at the top, bottom and middle and made some marks with a pencil ...

Then I grabbed some tape (should of been a brighter color like blue painters tape, but the electrical tape was all I had laying around) and taped the marks so I had a little bit of a “guide” to help me when I started cutting:
Then I grabbed the hacksaw and started cutting:

If I had more professional tools, like a vice this would of probably been straighter but it was simple to cut. And here’s how much I took off the stock...
Plus, here is the recoil pad shown next to it ...

And the final step where I cut that “lip” off the butt pad so it would fit together here:
And the final product is here in this comparison shot ...
It may be hard to tell the difference in length from a picture by itself, but if you look at the space between the end of the butt pad and the sling mount on the backend (bottom right part of the stock)—you can see it was quite a good amount of distance was eliminated—compare the distance above to the distance below:

**BEFORE:**

**AFTER:**
Anyways, depending on the shotgun you have, your mileage may vary but just know that it’s certainly possible to take off as much length from a stock as you need with just hand tools and you can pretty much put it all back together afterward.

So if you’re on a budget, then simply cutting your stock to the correct length is a great option for sure.

*** Side Saddle

It’s debatable whether you “need” this because it depends on your shotgun and how many shells you think you’re going to want.

As for myself, I got one for these reasons:

- My shotgun holds 6 in the tube. After I get done shooting someone/something I would want to top it back off ...

- There’s a 50% chance during any type of criminal attack that it will be more than one criminal, so more ammo is better ...

- Nobody was ever unhappy they brought too much ammo to a gun fight ...

- Side Saddles are cheap ...

- It will make practicing with my shotgun more enjoyable, allowing me to shoot more rounds with more “Tactical” practice so I can become more proficient with the shotgun ...

- I have the option to put a slug round or other “specialty” round in the side saddle “just in case” I ever need it (my current situation does not call for this, but good to know you could put a couple rounds of slug in your side saddle in case—I don’t know—something crazy happens like a criminal breaks in with level 5 body armor or he wants to get in a Hollywood style gun fight with you (highly unlikely) and hides behind a refrigerator—you could just shoot through it.)

- They are cheap so why not?

And let’s face it they look cool (I’m not ashamed to admit it).

My adjustable stock came with a plastic side saddle and screws to put it in. I didn’t want to do that. I also looked at other side saddles and reviews online, here’s what I discovered:

- The plastic ones often break under hard use ...
• The metal ones are tougher but often require you to replace the bolts already in your receiver with the side saddle ones ... and that can be an iffy choice (those are key bolts)

I basically found out that the Velcro attached side saddles are the best bet because:

1. They don’t break/crack because they’re made out of nylon/cloth
2. The right ones are TOUGH
3. They are easy to install with Velcro
4. They allow you to quickly switch out full side saddles with empty ones
5. If you had a vest or other “Tactical” equipment with Velcro you can easily carry around multiple side saddles that you just switch out instead of replacing the shells one by one ...
6. They hold up under hard use.

The brand I’ve heard the best things about is OriginalSOEGear.com. The side saddles—even though they’re overbuilt so they won’t sag with the weight of the shells or anything compared to other not plastic or metal brands. They have a lifetime warranty too (look up “SOE Gear” on YouTube you’ll see the owner of the company has many videos and is a no BS type of guy).

Here’s how you install the Velcro backed SOE Gear Side Saddle:

First, you need to clean the side of your shotgun to get any grease or dirt off, then you will need to get some industrial strength Velcro Brand Velcro, and you want to get your SOE shotgun cards ready:
You want the two inch wide Velcro by the way, here's a pic of mine:

So then I basically just stuck one of the shotgun cards on the Velcro and kind of matched it up where I thought it should go on the receiver of the shotgun. As I do with most these things – I eyeballed where I should cut the Velcro:
After I cut it, I cut a little off the top right hand corner just so it followed the curved line of the receiver a little more, again I eyeballed it then stuck it to the receiver and flattened it down multiple times to make sure it adhered good.

And then I just left it alone. The Velcro instructions say that it takes 24 hours for it to take full effect so I didn’t put any of the shotgun cards on for 24 hours (because then I would be tempted to rip them off I know)

And that’s it. I keep the one with buckshot on the receiver, plus the 6 shells in the shotgun tube gives me 12 total and that other shotgun card sits beside the shotgun where I store it ready for action if I need to grab it too.

*** Light

Ok so let me start by saying my dad always told me he didn’t think lights on guns made any sense because then you give away your position and someone knows where to shoot at when it’s dark.

I agreed with that because it made sense (and it was my Dad’s advice after all) but now I’ve changed my tune and I think that if you’re outfitting a gun primarily for home defense you should put a light on it.

Yes, you will give away your position. Too bad. You’re the good guy—that’s a chance you have to take.
And here’s why I don’t think it matters on the scale of “pros and cons”:

**CONS:**

**You give away your position.** Here’s the thing, I’ve yet to read a police report or news story where the bad guy “won” because a home defender gave away his position and got shot because of it.

**PROS:**

**If it’s night you will see your target before shooting it.** This is a basic gun safety rule. Know your target. It is VERY easy to find a news story about a father that killed either his children or wife because he shot what he thought was an intruder in the dark. You need to see what you’re shooting at, period. Especially if you have kids, wife or other family in the house.

Even if you don’t and you live alone I read another news story where a guy shot a neighbors kid who was drunk and crawled in the wrong bedroom window because his friends thought it was funny to drop him off at the neighbors house and let him try to stumble and sneak his way in through (what he thought was) his own bedroom window.

In short, the pro of seeing your target outweighs the negatives in my opinion.

**Modern gun lights are blinding.** They typically START at 200 lumens. When I bought my shotgun light (before I put it on) I shined it in my dad’s eyes—he did what everyone does when a stupid bright light in their eyes—-he turned away immediately and said “ahhhh”.

Right?

It sucks to have the light turned on in the dark, it sucks even more to have 200 lumens shined directly at your face in the dark. It would probably suck even more to have 200 lumens blind you in the eyes and then hear a safety or gun click or “Take one more step and I’m going to shoot” from the other side of that blinding light (I hope I’m only ever on the right side of that altercation).

Also, you might get lucky and bad guy with a gun or other weapon will not only squint his eyes, turn away, and say “ahhhh” but he’ll also put his hands up to defend his eyes from the blinding light—so you can see his hands, what he’s armed with, and if they’re in his face the gun is not pointing at you.

Anyways, get a light for your gun, no tactical trainer today recommends against it.

**Options for Shotgun Lights:**

**SUREFIRE:** Buy the surefire brand forend light and be done with it. This is the top of the line in shotgun lights. I was hesitant because of the price but I’m so glad I picked it up.
Obviously it’s stupid easy to work with, your pumping hand on the shotgun can hit the light and you can choose to just turn it on briefly or only when you’re holding the pressure switch or you can choose to switch it to “on” mode so it stays on the whole time without holding a switch.

The ONLY drawback to this I see is the price. I have the old one (pictured above and linked here) but you can get there new model too (pictured below and link here).

**Mounts and lights:** you can find various “screw on” mounts for regular tactical lights that hold these lights.

Here’s the type you can get on Amazon that work in a “clamp” manner for the forend, you put them where you can thumb the light on if you’re left or right handed.
Forend attachments work with the rail system on the Magpul MOE shotgun forend too. The little “holes” there are compatible with MOE rails, mounts and other accessories you can attach to a firearm:

Ok, let’s talk about ...

*** Sling ...
I recommend having a sling for your shotgun too.

As they say “a sling is to a long gun as a holster is to a pistol”. If you take ANY training course they will require a sling. You have some options like all long guns:

1 point  
2 point  
3 point

Some people go with the classic 2 point, or the 3 point, but I’ll just say that I prefer the 1 point sling when it comes to the Pump Shotgun.

Why? It’s a pump shotgun. You have to pump it, so the common excuse many guys have for not having a sling on their shotgun is excused—you won’t get caught up in a single point sling.

To run a single point sling, you’ll need to attach it.

I have tried out multiple single point slings in the last few weeks and I am most impressed and can fully recommend the SOE Gear 1 point Bungee Sling. It’s tough enough to hold the weight of the shotgun and you don’t even need a mount to put it on if you want to go ahead and wrap the nylon wrap around your stock.

I went ahead and got the GG&G Remington 870 Sling Mount with the heavy duty swivel. as you can see in most of the pictures and this one:
This bungee sling is super adjustable and was even short enough to work with my height (I’m 5’ 5” on a tall day). If you are looking for a TOUGH sling the SOE Gear slings are excellent and you won’t be disappointed.

*** Optional Upgrades You Might Need. ***

Depending on how your shotgun is setup or how you prefer to run it, you might need some other accessories that I would say are “optional” ...

**Tube extension:** If you have a standard capacity shotgun, not “tactical” it might only hold 2-4 shells, you’ll have to get a shotgun tube extension.

**Sights or optics:** You can go “low tech” and do whatever type of sight you like – aftermarket style like a XS Big Dot sight (recommended by James Yeager) or a blade sight ... or a ghost ring site ... or you can even mount a “red dot” type site on the top of the receiver.

I actually have no sights right now on mine. At the most – in the future if I ever have some money to burn – I would put an XS Big Dot sight on mine.

Now, let’s get to the part of the manual that reminds you of the most important thing.
Why You Need To *Practice* With Your Shotgun for Home Defense ...

It’s fun buying cool guns and gear. I get it. But you need to practice with your shotgun too.

You’ve seen a lot of myths busted in this report. One of those is that you don’t have to aim that the shotgun will magically make you a marksman and you’ll always hit your target.

I hope by now you understand that isn’t true and that you need to practice.

Some other skills you should practice ...

- Shooting rapidly
- Shooting on the move
- Reloading efficiently
- Reloading from the side saddle
- Reloading while moving to cover/just reloading while moving
- Transitioning from the shotgun to the handgun

**Shotgun Defensive Shooting Basics ...**

Here’s the good news ...

If you have learned how to shoot a handgun well for self-defense, then you should know most of the same basic skills that will translate to the shotgun or rifle (it’s why I recommend learning the handgun to be the first step for all firearm owners).

The fundamentals of shooting the shotgun are the same as a handgun, you just have to put a *little* more emphasis on your stance so you can deal with the recoil.

- Shoot the shotgun in the modified isosceles position
  - Do not have feet parallel, drop one foot back (more important vs handgun for recoil)
  - Lean forward aggressively (think “nose over toes”)
  - Pull it tight into your shoulder (the tighter you pull it in, the less it will hurt)

- Bring stock up against your cheek

And when I say “bring it up” that’s because if you have to move with your shotgun for home defense, you will be moving in the “low ready” position.

Do not complicate matters—it’s the same as the “low ready” with the rifle (illustration below from a military manual):
The Low Ready Position is the best for the Home Defense Shotgun

This allows you to:

- Scan the room looking for threats
- Quickly bring the gun up on target
- Keeps the muzzle DOWN and not out in front of you where an attacker can grab it (In this way it “shortens” the total length of your weapon)
- Instead of coming down on target you are coming up onto target with the muzzle, meaning your “sights” can always be seen as you look at a threat you intend to shoot.

Of course, the benefit of the single point sling I recommend with the shotgun is that it keeps the shotgun hanging in a position that is easily transitioned to the low ready.

Those are just some basics. You should get some live training, and then practice. You can practice dry fire extensively with the shotgun just like the handgun.

I recommend picking up some dry fire shotgun shells from Amazon.com. I like this brand:

B’s Dry Fire Snap Caps (TM) - Dummy 12 & 20 Gauge Training Rounds (9 Pack)
That way you can SAFELY practice reloads, manipulations, and drills with your shotgun. It will protect the internal components, but give you shotgun shells that weigh the same as real shells and make it easy to practice everything.

**WARNING:** Please get a color of these dummy rounds that is NOT the same color as the primary shotgun shells you use in your gun. You do NOT want to confuse your practice “dummy” rounds with live ammo. You should also MARK them some how so it is clear which rounds are your dummy rounds. Remember the fundamental rules of dry fire practice: NO live ammunition is in the same room. Triple check your gun for unloaded and safe and the ammunition is really dummy ammunition. Keep the gun pointed in a safe direction and never at anything you’re not willing to destroy.

Finally ...

It’s beyond the scope of this report but you want to have a good Home Defense plan setup and know exactly how your shotgun that you setup – for home defense – plays into that plan.

Who is gonna go grab it?

Who is gonna get the kids?

Where are you gonna post up or get into position? Etc, etc ...

**Closing Thoughts ...**

Let’s close this out ...

In this short report, we’ve covered a LOT of ground.

I hope I’ve given you some important points to think of. As you can see – when it comes to using the Home Defense Shotgun – it’s not as easy as some bone-head politician like Joe Biden makes it seem “Get a shotgun! Get a shotgun!”

It’s not a magical weapon that vanquishes all attackers. But it IS a unique weapon platform that can meet many of your home defense needs if you know what it can do, its limitations, and how to customize it to fit your own personal home defense plan.

My prayer is that I’ve helped you do all those things, and hopefully with my reviews, you’ve saved some money too. As always, thank you for reading this report.

For Our Freedoms,

*Caleb Lee*